

Appl. No.: 10/689,465
Amdt. dated 03/03/2006
Reply to Office action of November 4, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A clamping apparatus for electrically connecting at least a first ground wire to a grounding member, the clamping apparatus comprising:

a bottom clamping member comprising a bottom medial portion and first and second threaded holes on first and second sides of the bottom medial portion for accepting first and second screws, respectively, the first and second threaded holes disposed along first and second longitudinal axes, respectively;

a top clamping member discrete with respect to and for cooperation with the bottom clamping member and comprising a top medial portion for cooperation with the bottom medial portion to define a grounding member axis, the top clamping member comprising first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top clamping member for alignment with the first and second threaded holes of the bottom clamping member; and

trough comprising a base wall and opposing first and second side walls, the trough being ~~non-movably engaged~~ integral with the top clamping member opposite the bottom clamping member, the first side wall defining a threaded hole for receiving a set screw in threaded engagement therewith, the threaded hole extending along a third longitudinal axis through the first side wall and toward the second side wall, the third longitudinal axis intersecting at least substantially perpendicularly with at least one of the first and second longitudinal axes, the trough defining an opening between the first and second side walls for receiving a first ground wire, the opening further defining a ground wire axis parallel to the grounding member axis, whereby the first ground wire can be secured in the trough against the second side wall by the set screw.

10. (Cancelled)

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11. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top clamping member are slightly larger in diameter than the threaded holes of the bottom clamping member to allow a screw to pass through each hole in the top clamping member and thread into the corresponding threaded hole in the bottom clamping member, for providing a clamping action around a ground member between the top and bottom clamping members.

12. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the trough opening is adapted for receiving a first ground wire that can be laid-in the trough at an intermediate point on the ground wire.

13. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein one or both of the top and bottom medial portions are crowned in a direction away from the respective other medial portion to create an opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating a grounding member.

14. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 13, wherein one or both of the crowned medial portions has a serrated surface within the opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.

15. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a set screw having a rounded end for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire.

16. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a set screw having a sliding wedge affixed to an end of the set screw, the wedge adapted to move through the trough as the set screw is tightened and to engage a first ground wire for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire in cooperation with the second side wall.

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17. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate an additional second ground wire laid-in along side a first ground wire in the trough, the first and second ground wires being mechanically and electrically connected by the clamping pressure of the set screw.

18. (Currently Amended) A clamping apparatus for electrically connecting at least a first ground wire to a grounding member, the clamping apparatus comprising:

a bottom clamping member comprising a bottom medial portion and first and second threaded holes on first and second sides of the bottom medial portion receiving first and second screws, respectively, the first and second screws disposed along first and second longitudinal axes, respectively;

a top clamping member discrete with respect to and for cooperation with the bottom clamping member and comprising a top medial portion for cooperation with the bottom medial portion to define a grounding member axis, the top clamping member comprising first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top clamping member receiving the first and second screws;

trough comprising a base wall and opposing first and second side walls, the trough being ~~non-movably engaged~~ integral with the top clamping member opposite the bottom clamping member, the trough defining an opening between the first and second side walls, the opening further defining a ground wire axis parallel to the grounding member axis; and

a threaded hole defined by the first side wall for threadedly engaging a set screw disposed along a third longitudinal axis, the third longitudinal axis intersecting at least one of the first and second longitudinal axes above the first or second screw.

19. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top clamping member are slightly larger in diameter than the threaded holes of the bottom clamping member.

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20. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the trough opening is adapted for receiving a first ground wire that can be laid-in the trough at an intermediate point on the ground wire.

21. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate a first ground wire and a second ground wire laid-in along side the first ground wire in the trough.

22. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein one or both of the top and bottom medial portions are crowned in a direction away from the respective other medial portion to create an opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating a grounding member.

23. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein one or both of the crowned medial portions has a serrated surface within the opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the set screw has a rounded end for applying clamping pressure against a first ground wire.

26. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the set screw further includes a sliding wedge affixed to an end of the set screw, the wedge adapted to move through the trough as the set screw is tightened and to engage a first ground wire for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire in cooperation with the second side wall.

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27. (Previously Presented) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate a second ground wire laid-in along side a first ground wire in the trough, the first and second ground wires being electrically connected by the clamping pressure of the set screw.